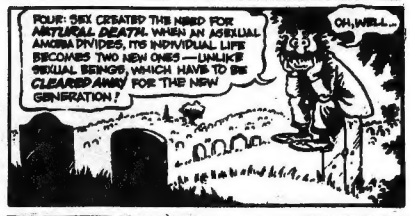
COMIX WORLD 109. October 1, 1978. Copyright Clay Geerdes, Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707. World Rights Reserved. Subs: $5.50 for 24, $10 for 48. The mini-comix are 50¢ by mail. Now available: A Humour (few), Disco Mouse, Weird Waitress Fantasies 1, and Babyfat 1. Babyfat is a little eight-pager of illustrated weird news items with art by me, Gary Whitney, Bob Vojtko, Scott Shaw, Brad Foster, and Fred Hembeck. #2 is in production.* That marsupial logo is by ex-Boston artist Larry Gonick who has emigrated to California where he has just completed the first volume of an incredibly witty and educational CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE, a book anyone can read. You have to swear to being an adult to read most ug comix, but not this one. Volume One takes the reader from the beginning, the Big Bang, to the extinction of the dinosaurs and the beginning of humanity. Next issue picks up on early humans.* ZAP 9 (see preview panels) came out Friday, September 22, 1978. It's the first dollar Zap. The first one sold for a quarter a decade ago, now it sells for over a hundred bucks. Cover by S. Clay Wilson, who maintained his crude and irreverent image at the Berkeley Comic Art Fair by posing for photographers with his third finger raised. Wilson sat in the dealer's room part of the afternoon selling $20-30 dollar drawings of the Checkered Demon, probably the most anarchic character in comic history. The table was littered with imported beer bottles (and you thought he drank only domestic beer, right?) and shrouded with smoke from Roger Brand's chain-smoked cigarettes. Nearby, Spain sketched the same big-titted woman again and again, the drawings going for $10 and over. In The recently published R. Crumb Sketchbook (done in Germany--$25 a copy), there are numerous drawings of Aline Kominsky, all of which only means that artists dig drawing their wives or girl friends. Betty, in Crumb's Zap 9 "Lap O' Luxury" satire, is another of those big-assed ladies he loves so well. A lot of fine Robert Williams and Spain in this long-awaited Zap. Spain continues his Sangrella, a futuristic tale of cloning and bad ladies with Planet Comic space ships; both Spain and Trina love those old Planets. Me, too.

Chromium satirist Williams takes on the entire continent in an amazing centerfold: "The Mystery Map of Assinine Atoll." There's a new Coochy Cooty two-pager and a page of Gilbert Shelton's Motoring Tips. Definitely a superior underground comic.* Ken Hyland was at the Fair taking pix for his new Amazing Fantasy Gazette, a west Coast oriented publication which will begin coming out every other month then become a monthly. Information from him at 127 Montgomery St., Suite 504, San Francisco, CA 94104. 408-294-7964.* Mondo Snarfo should be on the stands this week. Larry Rippee was in Wisconsin recently and said the book had gone to the printer. * CHECK LIST: Anarchy, Cartoon History of the Universe, Tales of Jerry, the Stoned Vampire (Jane Oliver), The Funny Book 3, Roldo the Barbarian (1232 Downing St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3E 2R7), Chocolate Alphabet, and Slow Death 9 and Zap 9.* Fine comic art--George Wunder's Amateurs at Arms (from Stackpole Books). * Tom Hosier's latest weirdness is Adventures in Pathology. $1 pp from him at 1044 Chapel St. Apt. 507, New Haven, CT 06510. Tom does things like Purple Warps and Worm and Modern Correspondence. Dada. * Now running in the BAY GUARDIAN, San Francisco Gothic, a strip by Trina, who just sold a story to Heavy Metal. * In Cheri (Oct, pp 54-57), Sex Mutants by Melinda Gebbie. That mag also runs Mary Sativa's stuff.* THE BIG TWO DOLLAR SPECIAL. From Comix World. You get a copy of 1) PORTABLE FANZINE 1; 2) SEATTLE SIMPLETON 1; and 3) UNDERGROUND '76. All for $2. October only. Don't forget to give a Christmas subscription to CW to a friend.* OMNI is out. PENTHOUSE is into the Science Fiction market in a big way with this one.*

Ultimate gore: the cover for BLOOD LATHER displayed in the art show at the Berkeley Comic Fair. Art by Boxell and Larson. Hardest core: The art from WHITE WHORE FUNNIES 2. On hand to watch the reaction were Raye Horne and publisher Larry Fuller. Fuller's next is GAY HEARTTHROBS 2.* Be warned about a mag called MALE CHAUVINIST. The people who are publishing this put out FACES and NEW PINK and burned a lot of artists and writers.* The ultimate color snapshot: Spain, Wilson, Shelton, Joel Beck, and Roger Brand together at the comic fair. $.50 from CW (plus a 15-cent stamp). * Berkeley BARB splits in two in October. The ad section becomes THE SPECTATOR, a sex paper (25¢) and BARB goes for news and becomes free.

TWO: SEX ALLOWED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIGHER ORGANISMS. ASEXUAL CREATURES ENSURE SURVIVAL BY BREEDING LIKE CRAZY. SEXUAL BEINGS HAVE MORE LEISURE TO DEVELOP.
HOW 'BOUT SOME SEX, REX?
NOT TONIGHT, HONEY! I'M GOIN' DOWN TO THE PRIMA BAR WITH THE FELLAS TO--AH--DEVELOP MY ELBOWS!

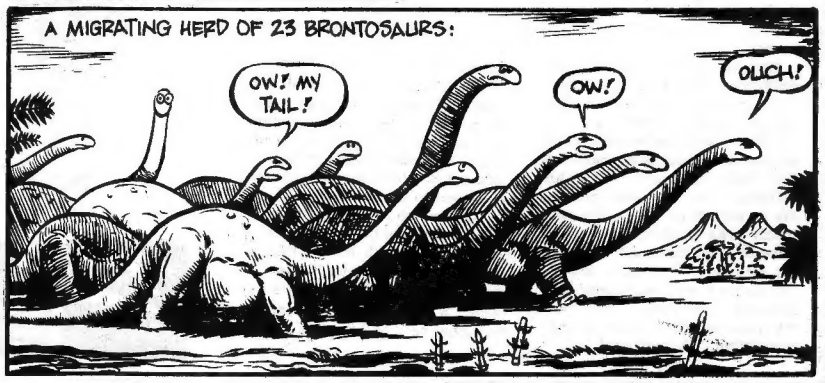

FOUR: SEX CREATED THE NEED FOR NATURAL DEATH. WHEN AN ASEXUAL AMOEBA DIVIDES, ITS INDIVIDUAL LIFE BECOMES TWO NEW ONES--UNLIKE SEXUAL BEINGS, WHICH HAVE TO BE CLEARED AWAY FOR THE NEW GENERATION!
OH, WELL...

Freelance Victory

An administrative law judge turned down Larry Flynt Publications' attempt to reopen the unemployment case it lost to freelancer Charles Raisch (see July's newsletter). The judge ruled in May that Raisch was entitled to unemployment benefits because, like regular employees of a company, he did not have control over his work.

Flynt has only one slim chance to overturn the case. He can still appeal to an unemployment appeals tribunal on the basis of procedural error, but not on the substance of the decision.

At MA's request, Bay Area Lawyers for the Arts referred Raisch to Barbara Ginsberg, a local attorney, who provided valuable legal counseling. If you have questions about whether you might be eligible for unemployment benefits give MA a call at 441-2557.



Porn to politics

Colors explode at comic festival

By RUTH GERSHENZON
STAFF WRITER

Comic artist S. Clay Wilson grinned broadly and extended his middle finger in a cheerful "fuck you," holding the pose until the photographer snapped the picture.

The occasion was the Fifth Annual Berkeley Comix Art Fair, stomping ground of local Bay Area underground comic books and their artists and publishers. The fair was held all day Saturday at Ashkenaz, a local cultural events center.

The fair, whose organization was directed by comic book historian Clay Geerdes, is as exclusive to the Bay Area as "It's It" ice cream sandwiches — where else in the U.S. can one hundred underground comic book cartoonists and five underground comic publishing companies be found?

Serving as much as a reunion for local underground comic artists as a way for those artists to promote sales of their comic books, the fair had a prevailing mood of obscenity with a smile.

Buyers at the fair were more often than not insiders in the underground comic book world, going from dealer's table to dealer's table searching for a specific comic book with the air of a long-time grocery shopper scanning supermarket shelves for the Best Foods mayonnaise.

While comic book dealers' tables are a necessary part of any comic convention, the Berkeley fair also featured a cartoonist's art gallery and continuous showings of Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and other cartoons.

Underground comic art, traditionally a racy marriage of straight pornography and mind-expanding drug hallucinations, is expanding its scope to include some more serious issues. Recent strips now speak to the issues of nuclear power, seal and whale slaughter and the problems of Native Americans.

Last Gasp underground comic book publisher's "Slow Death" and "All Atomic Comics" series are examples of this unfunny, un-smutty branch of comics.

Current directions in underground comic books can best be assessed by listening to the cartoonists themselves, and there were more than two dozen of the normally-reclusive artists on hand at the fair.

Guy Colwell, creator of the "Inner City Romance" comic book series, considers himself more of a serious artist but supports himself by cartooning. He is not the only underground comic book artist who is in it strictly to make money.

Making money by selling underground comics at $25 a page? "Well, it's more than I earn selling my paintings," Colwell said.

Colwell, with red whiskers and serious demeanor reminiscent of Van Gogh, frequently inks in his paintings and includes them in his comic strips. Since his first comic was published in 1972 Colwell's comics have focused on the pit-falls and lusts of day-to-day living from a non-comic perspective. "My ideas come from my present life, from what's around me," Colwell said.

In 1968, Colwell refused the draft and spent a year and a half on a prison farm, which explains the frequency with which convicts — both escaped and still serving time — show up in his strips.

Colwell's cartoon characters' LSD experiences are a direct reflection of his own. "If acid is in my comics, then it means that I just recently tripped," he said.

Traina Robbins is the most commercially successful of the growing number of women cartoonists in the traditionally all-male world of underground comic artists. She has a regular strip in the Bay Guardian called "San Francisco Gothic" and has recently sold some of her work to Heavy Metal, a comic magazine owned by National Lampoon.

"A lot of underground cartoonists are sexist pigs," Robbins said. "They depict rape as a hilarious riot which is even funnier if the woman's body is torn apart afterwards." Robbins criticized the cliche of the great big woman with large breasts and protruding nipples, "just perfect for a little guy to ride on," propagated by R. Crumb, S. Clay Wilson and other leading male underground cartoonists.

As a reaction to this, Robbins helped form the Women's Comics Collective in 1972, and edited the first underground all-women comic book published by Last Gasp, titled "It Ain't Me Babe."

Robbins emphasizes "sword and sorcery" and detective adventure comics, featuring female protagonists. "I live in a fantasy world; my protagonists are what I see," she exaplined. "My women are all five inches taller than me and very tough."

Robbins described the basic difference between male and female-drawn comics. "If a man draws a cartoon of a rocketship journey, the pilot will be a man, and he will be served coffee by a woman. When a woman does the same strip, the ship's pilot is a woman."

There are now nine Bay Area women cartoonists who publish a regular underground anthology of their work titled "Wimmin's Comix."

Gilbert Shelton, creator of "The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers" comic books, described his efforts as "more philosophical than political."

Budweiser in hand, the Austin-bred creator of Freewheelin' Franklin, Phineas, and Fat Freddy and his street-wise cat described the now-famous furry friends as "one third archetype, one third people I know, and one third me."

"I don't consciously try to look for stories," Shelton said. "I just go to bars and parties and listen." Shelton's famous statement that "dope will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no dope," is something a friend — who refused to be given credit for it — said to him once.

Shelton, who has been living in the Bay Area for the last ten years, said even though his characters smoke a lot of dope he himself is never stoned when he draws them. "It takes me eight hours to do a page as it is," Shelton said.

The music of Grateful Dead, old Rolling Stones, and Leon Russell reigned at the fair, a direct reflection of the fact that most of the creators of underground comic books are survivors of the Haight/Ashbury days and are now more than thirty years of age. Twenty-two year old cartoonist Jane J. Oliver is a refreshing exception to that rule.

Oliver spoke enthusiastically of her first two comic books, "The Beagles Looney Hearts Club" (a pre-Ruttles, pre-Stigwood Beatles take-off), and "Tales of Jerry, the Stoned Vampire."

"I was always seeing these movies in my head," Oliver said, explaining what led her to comic book art. "Writing didn't quite do it, and art didn't quite do it, so I combined them."

Oliver, who grew up with not only Superman and Batman, but also the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, is planning a second Beagles comic book. "It is a cross between Shakespeare's "Macbeth" and the 'Paul McCartney is dead' theme," Oliver said. The titled, appropriately, will be "McBeatle."

Publishers are very important in the underground comics world. Because no one else will publish the comic book material if they don't, an underground comic publisher can effectively act as censor as well as publisher.

But when offended parties file pornography suits against the comics, the publisher takes the rap.

Last Gasp, along with Rip-off Press, the other major Bay Area underground comic distributors, keeps its adveritisng to a bare minimum, relying mainly on word of mouth to sell their comic books.

"We make only four cents gross profit off of every comic book that retails for a dollar, so we don't have much choice," Turner said.

But with major California record store chains such as Music Plus, Odyssey and Tower Records now featuring underground comic books for sale in their newest push, "our comic book-sales are really flying," Turner said.

$100 FROM YOUR DEALER NOW!
GOBBLE GOBBLE GOBBLE GOBBLE GOBBLE
YA-HOO!
JESUS LOVES ME THIS I KNOW FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO
GOBBLE GOBBLE GOBBLE GOBBLE
©R. CRUMB.
UPON HIS RETURN HOME, AMAL DECIDES TO RELAX WITH A DRINK. MAYBE PICK UP A LAY BEFORE MEETING UP WITH MISTER BIG...
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRAVEL AND NOW THAT I HAVE THE TIME I THINK I WILL.
YOU SHOULD. HEY! HOW ABOUT ANOTHER ONE? EH?
©S. CLAY WILSON.
YOU CAN STAY HERE AT MY APARTMENT AS LONG AS MY "SAVINGS" LAST. BUT SOON I'LL HAVE TO FIND A JOB. HONEY, I GUESS WE CAN'T "LIVE ON LOVE" FOREVER!
CRACKERS
HEY, CAN I PUT MY PANTS BACK ON YET?
©Robert Williams.
GARSTNIGAR FARSNAR!
YEAH, YEAH...
GNARF!
LOOK OUT!
HELP!
©Victor Moscoso.
IT IS THE LORD OF THE LIMPY ZIGGURAT LATTIMORE, THEIR LEADER
©S. Clay.

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